

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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AUTOMOBILE WALLET holds car records without folding. Pockets are provided for operator's license, registration, automobile membership, insurance identity and credit cards. The wallet also features an accident report pad and car lubrication and expense record forms. Wallet is sold in black, red and beige vinyl.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

BIKE "GARAGE," a heavy gauge vinyl cover, is especially designed to fit over almost any model of bike and protect it from rain and snow. At the bottom, the cover hooks to the bike's spokes.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

OBSTACLE SIGHTER, for blind or partially blind persons, is a portable electronic scanning device that transmits a touch "picture" to the user's hand. The range of view is from ground level to well above the head. Power is supplied by standard flashlight batteries.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

PLASTIC FOOTBALL PADDING, shown in the photograph, is being marketed for the 1960 season. It features increased impact resistance, more flexibility and body conforming. High density poly-



ethylene replaces many fiber parts. Other parts include nylon covering and vinyl padding. The protective equipment resists water and perspiration.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

BANK MATTRESS has a hidden zipper pocket built into one end. The pocket is 18 inches long and six inches wide, big enough for temporary storage of cash or small valuables. Mattress is available in both full and twin sizes.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

"SOLAR SYSTEM" MAGNETS do dozens of tricks and may be used to demonstrate the pull of gravity between the earth, moon and sun. Each magnet kit contains three doughnut-shaped magnets, each painted to represent the earth, sun or moon.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

SHOE SHINE TRAY holds five bottles of shoe polish upright and provides a neat work area for shining children's shoes. When not in use, bottles may be closed and entire plastic tray hung on a wall or door.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960

MATCH CARTRIDGE, a .22 long rifle cartridge expressly designed for pistol competitions, utilizes a special 40-grain match bullet and has a nickel plated case. A special bullet lubricant helps insure reliable functioning in autoloading .22 caliber handguns.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

IT ALL STARTED with just two white mice. That was all the scientist needed, and the two of them had food and room enough to spare in their little 12-by-12-inch cage. But then one morning, there were 11 mice in that cage—papa, mama and nine tiny hairless young!

For a while, the additions made little difference. But as the young began to grow, father mouse became rather irritable because of cramped quarters and had to be moved out. Meanwhile, though she was still nursing her nine young, it became obvious that mother mouse would soon be a mother again. So as soon as the young were weaned—about two weeks after birth—the mother mouse was placed in the new cage with her mate.

By this time, the nine young mice were no longer tiny, but active half-grown youngsters that ate an amazing amount of food. Their fraternal love was fast being dissolved by lively fights, as the strain of too much "togetherness" began to tell on

Too Many Mice



them. Meanwhile, mother mouse gave birth to a new litter of seven.

Now, instead of two mice comfortably housed and fed in a roomy cage, there were a total of 18 mice competing for food and space in two crowded cages.

At this point, the scientist was forced to play the role of predator, removing 14 of the 18 mice permanently. But in spite of his "predation," the scientist was still two mice ahead, for there were now two mice in each of two cages. All were again well fed and provided with ample living space.

This little incident in the laboratory re-

flects very nicely the situation always found in nature. All animals tend to reproduce at a rate much greater than their environment can support. If all the young of all the wild mice managed to live to reproductive age, soon there would be more mice than blades of grass. This never happens in nature, because there is a natural rigid control over animal numbers.

Just as the scientist was forced to step in and remove the excess mice, so excess numbers are eliminated by predation, disease and starvation.

In nature, the animals of prey usually weed out the weaker and less alert individuals, leaving the hardy few to carry on the race. When, as sometimes happens, populations shoot above normal proportions, the resulting crowded conditions may lead to disease epidemics. In any event, when numbers are too great, starvation inevitably results as the food supply dwindles. This is the natural means of insuring a proper balance of numbers. In this light, the hawk, as a predator, is as necessary to the well-being of mice as is an ample food supply.

Science News Letter, July 2, 1960